

REMARKS

This is a full and timely response to the Official Action mailed October 24, 2006. Reexamination and reconsideration of the rejections set forth therein in light of the following remarks are courteously requested.

Claim 6 has been rewritten to include the limitations set forth in the claims from which it previously depended. Claims 22, 23, 24 and 25 have been amended to clarify the term "Energy Release Index"—this amendment finds basis in the Specification at p. 12, l. 28-31. Claims 1-5 and 19-21 have been canceled without prejudice in order to expedite issuance of the allowed claims. Applicants intend to file a divisional application containing these claims in the near future. Applicants respectfully notes that claims 22-30 have been allowed. Claims 31-33 have been added. They find basis in the Specification in original claims 1 and 19-21.

The Office Action of October 24, 2006 rejected Claims 1-5 and 19-21 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,060,077 (Meignant) or U.S. Patent No. 4,347,237 (Evenstad et al.). Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this rejection in view of the ensuing discussion and the foregoing amendments to the claims.

As applicants have chosen to delete claims 1-5 and 19-21 in order to expedite the issuance of the other claims herein, applicants respectfully submit that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) is rendered moot. Although applicants believe that these claims are patentable over the cited references they respectfully submit that the cited references are irrelevant to the claims as they now stand. Applicants therefore request reconsideration of this rejection.

For the foregoing reasons, applicants respectfully submit that all the claims set forth in the above-captioned application are now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration of the above remarks and amendments to the claims and an early Notice of Allowance are courteously solicited. If the Examiner has any comments or suggestions that could place this application in even better form, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned Attorney at the below-listed number.

If there are any other fees due in connection with the filing of this response, please charge the fees to our Deposit Account No. 10-0750.

Respectfully submitted,

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